

# Abstracts

Christoph Lorke

*Extra-European Workers as an intercultural Challenge: The Handling of “Foreigners” by Workplaces in the German Democratic Republic*

The article concerns itself with the question of how workplaces dealt with extra-European workers active in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) from the 1970s onwards. Taking different examples from everyday practices in the workplace, the author shows how far the GDR’s migration regime was in no sense a narrow corset but actually allowed multiple spaces for interpretation and practical action, both for migrant workers and workplaces. A look at the worlds of work and leisure, nutritional habits, and living conditions indicates how important the regional and local surroundings were, given that these created additional possibilities for action (and placed limits on already existing practices, sometimes substantially). Moreover, the investigation reveals the creative individual- and strong-willed-appropriations made by foreign workers in dealing with the pertaining institutional circumstances.

Lutz Raphael

*Flexible Careers and transnational Life Courses: Workers’ Biographies and Family Maintenance Strategies among Turkish Miners in the Ruhr Basin (1970–2000)*

The article constitutes a micro-historical case study of the careers and life courses of Turkish migrants working as miners in the Ruhr district in the period of de-industrialisation between 1970 and 2000. The research is based on archival sources (in particular, individual files on migrant families) from the city of Gelsenkirchen and panel data from the *Sozio-oekonomische Panel* (SOEP). After situating the individual cases within the broader socio-economic context and the life courses of Turkish miners in the region, the article identifies four different types of reactions to the challenges of mass unemployment, the closing of mines, and the ongoing reduction of jobs in the mining industry. Firstly, some miners – whose families partly still lived there – chose the option of returning to Turkey. Secondly, a number of miners’ sons nevertheless embarked upon careers as miners in the shrinking industry. Thirdly, Turkish households in the second generation adopted strategies of maintaining relations to their regions of origin and combining work and career opportunities in both countries. Lastly, many migrant family members sought jobs and training in alternative sectors of the economy in the Ruhr district, but in doing so faced periods of precarious employment and income instability.

Alexander Kraus/Michael Siems

*From Object to Actor. Integration policy towards Italian “Guest-Workers” (Gastarbeiter) in Wolfsburg during the Years of “Normalisation”*

While the work-based migration to Wolfsburg that began after the Hiring Agreement (*Anwerbeabkommen*) of 1962 already counts as a well-researched topic, the same can only be said to a limited extent about the subsequent socio-economic and cultural processes beginning in the 1970s. Hence, it is precisely this decade that forms the focus of this article, because it proved to be a key phase of “normalization” with regard to migrants’ life circumstances. The author investigates four main themes in order to create a differentiated picture of these life circumstances, as well as to take account of the town council as an increasingly involved actor in integration policy. These four themes also perform a reciprocally corrective function in terms of how the analysis is carried out: 1) the perception of “the” Italians in the German-speaking public sphere; 2) the integration efforts undertaken by the municipal polity; 3) the changing living conditions of migrants; 4) the situation with regard to school education.

Anna Marsden

*“Welcome to Prato.” Migrant entrepreneurship in Prato and the contradictory integration process of the Chinese community since the 1990s*

Prato is a Tuscan city that has grown thanks to immigration, first of all from the South of Italy and latterly from abroad, especially China. Currently, the city comprises just over 190,000 inhabitants, of whom only 43% were born in Prato (and many of these are themselves children of immigrants) and more than 38,000 are foreigners (equivalent to about 20% of the population), a majority of whom are Chinese (20,695 or 11% of the total population). Beginning at the start of the 1990s, immigration from China has rapidly transformed the city into the seat of one of the most important Chinese communities in Europe and has contributed significantly to local economic development. Thousands of small enterprises have extended the textile industry’s capacity to produce ready to wear fashion, as well as helping the development of other sectors. The article traces the history of Chinese immigration in this region, analysing processes of integration and social conflict, including the role of Chinese businesses therein.

Enzo lanes

*“The nursery school is the most powerful means for the diffusion of Italianization”: The Role of the Opera Nazionale Assistenza Italia Redenta in the process of Italianization in Alto Adige/South Tyrol*

The *Opera Nazionale Assistenza Italia Redenta* (the National Aid Organization for Redeemed Italy – ONAIR) was established in 1919 on the initiative of the

Duchess of Aosta. In the years of its existence, up until 1977, it became an important instrument for various governments in enacting social and educational policies in Alto Adige/South Tyrol. However, the organization's development was linked in particular to the Fascist regime and its attempt to assimilate the German mother-tongue population. Indeed, during these years, the ONAIR set up a vast network of nursery and village schools, and organized other activities accompanying educational instruction. In addition, it established numerous dispensaries and other health facilities. After the Second World War, the return of democracy, and the consolidation of provincial autonomy, ONAIR's importance continually diminished down to its eventual dissolution. The consultation of the archival sources relating to ONAIR in the provincial archives in Trento and Bolzano/Bozen has allowed the author to reconstruct the various historical phases that this entity underwent, as well as the often conflictual political debate surrounding it.